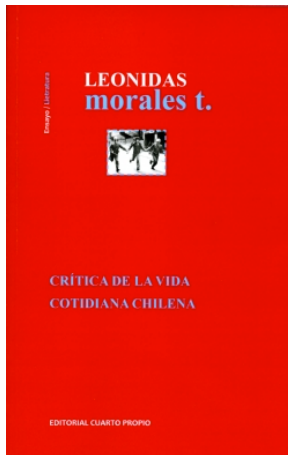


RESEÑA



CRÍTICA DE LA VIDA COTIDIANA CHILENA

MORALES, LEONIDAS

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What is the point of recreating the customs of a nation? Why does it worth doing this from the perspective of the greatest Chilean authors?

How is modern Chilean history related to its greatest authors' texts- Understanding life itself as a great palimpsest?

It is impossible to think that Leonidas Morales has not raised the questions mentioned above when covering *Crítica a la Vida Cotidiana Chilena*, from the National literature.

Crítica a la Vida Cotidiana Chilena, a text which is aimed at all those who want to undertake a deep revision of those important aspects of our society which many times are not noticed (or are intended not to be noticed) which somehow bring us closer to our reality and cultural identity. It is not the first time that Morales deals with the topic of daily life aspects, fact evidenced by literary essays and cultural criticism published by Chilean and foreign university magazines; Also well known books such as *La Poesía de Nicanor Parra* (1972), *Conversaciones con Nicanor Parra* (1990), *Figuras Literarias*, *Rupturas Culturales* (1993), *Conversaciones con Diamela Eltit* (1998), *Formalismo y Ambigüedad*, among others; fact that reaffirms his place as a renowned academic and author.

The Prologue is a profound reflection from the point of view of José



Donoso and Gabriela Mistral, who refers to the enclosure and the self-reference, which is the typical national vice, and also the connotation for the Chilean society. “The constant and suffocating Chilean claustrophobia with its limitants and flatness: The same all people, living in the same place and speaking the same all story (13)”, Donoso whose words denotes the sensation of suffocation and at the same time the novelist's apprehensions of returning to Chile. Morales begins his reflection about the *claustrum* in which we are all immersed as a society, submitted, flat and aligned by a daily routine and a way of living.

Crítica a la Vida Cotidiana is at the same time, a description of a social space, categorical distinction between the public and private, taking this concept from the same symbolic border of the self and the other, in which the street has undoubtedly become a protagonist of what is nowadays understood by urban space, being the responsible to establish a social order; generating not only all sort of daily life conducts, but also rescuing at the same time the inner space. What Morales confirms is the impossibility of the construction of a public space, without the affirmation and almost no defence of the private space, but both of them are circumscribed in the *habitus*. For resuming Bordieu, who refers to the national enclosure and at the same time recalling Engels during his stay in England and the emblematic figure of *flaneur*, which Benjamin rescues from the theme of Parisian streets in the Nineteenth Century. Morales establish then the street as a place par excellence, initiating this way the allegory with the cinematographic language of “the daily life filming”. Consequently as a link and throughout the analysis of authors such as Carmen Arriagada, Joaquín Edwards Bello, Gabriela Mistral, Luis Oyarzún and Pedro Lemebel, Morales argues what he understands by referential genres, justifies his choice and takes them as the basis of the critic reconstruction of the Chilean daily life history.

Morales in his book, remarks the usefulness of the letter as a means of analysis, a pertinent example about the previously mentioned is the epistolary love affairs, Carmen Arriagada's letters sent to Mauricio Rugendas; which beyond being a group a romantic texts, which activates a female voice that it is revealed to the world as a “movement of discursive sense (48)”. The chronicle under the acute gaze of Joaquín Edwards Bello, his vision of the aristocratic families, which he belonged to, takes into account the reestablished figure of “*El Roto*”, already existing by the 1920's and celebrated as a symbol of pride for the people in 1964.

Likewise in the work “*La habitualidad del recado*” which goes hand in hand with Gabriela Mistral's idea, who remarks the importance of this resource in many of her articles published, newspapers and Hispano-American magazines, relating this at the same time with the daily life verbal communication.

Morales also considers the dairy as a constant reflexive writing about the time

of modernity and he analyses it from Luis Oyarzún's travels diaries by expanding files which show the testimonial tone of this author and his position of offended witness by the Chilean daily life.

Morales concludes his critics from Pedro Lemebel's texts, who by revisiting the tragedy of September 11th and the subsequent years post dictatorship, exalting the figure of "*La loca*" which Morales interprets as a narrative space of freedom. Through "*La loca*" and the social urban space, along with the characteristic and controversial Lemebel's tone who deals with diverse social realities, expression and genre created by the criticism towards the established power.

The corpus dealt in this book is vast and all characters before mentioned are recognizable in the public space of the Chilean society. Morales reviews the urban vision of all these characters and also relates them with the philosophical postulates of Engles, Foucault, Barthes, De Certau, among others; as well as he refers to Benveniste, Rotker, Klein, Hardt, Henri Lefebvre, so as to conduct an accurate analysis of the current socioeconomic model which rules in our country and how it is experienced in the Chilean daily life.

Undoubtedly, *Crítica a la Vida Cotidiana* becomes an interesting book for all those who want to get to know the Chilean identity construction, from the perspective of the literature, since Morales conducts an in-depth analysis from different perspectives, covering essential works from the national literary canon. It is the ideal book for those who reflect on the national cultural identity.